

30:! JOURNEYS IN KUEDISTAN
LETTER xxix

It is appointed that the whole Psalter be recited in three days, and though I imagine that some abridgment is made, the priests and people, contrary to rule, are apt to sit on the floor during the antiphonal singing of the psalms, owing to their extreme length. The chanting is very discordant, as each man adopts the key which suits himself.

The "kiss of peace" is an interesting and decorous feature of the daily worship, and is always given at the beginning, even if it should be omitted at the close. On entering the church the priest crosses himself and kisses the Cross, which always lies on the altar on the north side, saying, "Glory be to God in the highest." After this the people come forward and kiss first the Cross and then the priest's hand, and each passing on touches the hands of those who before him have kissed the sacred emblem and raises his own hand to his lips. It is the custom always to kiss the hand of a bishop or priest on meeting him in the road or elsewhere, and the salutation is performed in a reverential manner.

The church furniture and vestments show the great poverty of the people. The altar cloth is figured white cotton. Two tarnished and battered candlesticks stand on the altar, and a very sordid cross in the recess behind it. The chalice is a silver bowl, tarnished, almost blackened, by neglect, and the paten is a silver tray in the same state. There are a bronze censer,

an antique,
with embossed scripture figures upon it, and
a branched
lamp-stand surmounted by a bird, both of the
rudest construction, and greatly neglected. Dust and
cobwebs of
ancient date, droppings from candles and
bits of candle
wicks offend Western eyes in the sacristy
and elsewhere.
where.

The clerical dress is very simple and of
the poorest